

Minutes
Town of Acton Community Preservation Committee
March 19, 2015
Public Safety Facility

Members Present: Peter Ashton (Chair), Peter Berry, Tory Beyer, Walter Foster, Amy Green (Vice Chair), Susan Mitchell-Hardt, Ken Sghia-Hughes, Joe Will (Clerk)

Others Present: Kristen Guichard (Acton Assistant Planner), Roland Bourdon (Finance Committee observer)

Peter A opened the meeting at 7:36 PM. Tory brought cupcakes made with fresh eggs.

I. Minutes of February 26, 2015

- It was moved, seconded, and voted unanimously to approve the minutes as presented.

II. Review Town Meeting Presentation

- Peter A presented the CPC award decisions to the FinCom last week and is willing to present them at Town Meeting (TM). (FinCom approved all.) The CPC reviewed the TM slides prepared by Kristen, offering occasional edits.

Roland suggested that at TM the CPC have a hallway display table with flyers to hand out, with display and flyers reinforcing the CPC Articles and pointing out what a great thing the CPA is for the Town. (The Acton Conservation Trust will have a table promoting how the \$300K open space set aside facilitates land acquisition.) Peter A and Kristen said that they would stand for awhile at a CPC table.

III. Discuss surcharge percent collected

- Peter A floated an Open Space Committee (OSC) idea of increasing the CPA surcharge, with the OSC motivated by the possibility of another Town committee proposing an additional tax on real estate transactions as a revenue source for land acquisition (not involving the OSC). Peter presented OSC arguments in favor of more \$, specifically increasing the surcharge from 1.5% to 3%. A 3% surcharge would make Acton eligible for the second and third rounds of CPA funding.

Kristen prepared a handout showing that 3% in 2014 would have given us \$300K above what we received from only round 1. Peter asked for CPC thoughts on this.

- The 1.5% surcharge was a compromise to begin with.
- It included the maximum exemption.
- CPA has proven “it’s here” and more communities are going for it.
- The strongest appetite is for open space. A 3% surcharge would allow us to better build the open space “war chest.”
- Timing for 3% would be good. There is no override pending. The economy is good.
- We would have to make a case for 3%. We need to show land we could get.

- The fact that this would be a tax increase is the tough part of the sell.
- This would depend on whether the State will continue to fund the CPA.
- This CPC has no apparent preferred group. It puts all the interest groups into one bucket. Our “balance” makes the CPC look fair to the public.
- The Board of Selectmen probably would support this, but we would have to get others on board.
- A tax on land transfers would affect fewer people year by year.
- More CPA \$ would encourage more project applications.

Peter will talk to the Board of Selectmen to help see whether it’s worth setting up an exploratory committee. He encouraged others on the CPC to talk to their respective “stakeholders.”

IV. Administrative updates

- none

8:54 PM — It was moved, seconded, and voted unanimously to adjourn.

Date:

04/06/15 Town Meeting (ABRHS)